

Serial No. 10/692,554
Atty. Docket No. 11333/29

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims below will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. The changes to currently amended claims are shown using strikethrough to identify deleted material and underlining to identify added material.

Listing of Claims:

1-25. (canceled)

26. (currently amended) A sample analyzer for analyzing a sample, comprising:

~~a pipette for suctioning the sample;~~

a sample preparation unit comprising a pipette, and configured for preparing a measured diluted sample for measurement by diluting the sample supplied by the pipette;

~~a pipette washing unit for washing the pipette;~~

a solution container holder for holding a solution container comprising an acidic solution used for the diluting of the sample by the sample preparation unit and for ~~the washing of the pipette by the pipette washing unit;~~

a detection unit for obtaining a detection signal from the ~~measured~~ diluted sample prepared by the sample preparation unit; and

a controller in communication with the detection unit and configured for ~~calculating~~ obtaining an analysis result from the detection signal obtained by the detection unit;

wherein the sample preparation unit prepares the diluted sample by diluting the sample supplied by the pipette with the acidic solution suctioned from the solution container, and washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container.

27. (currently amended) The sample analyzer of claim 26, further comprising a washing solution supplier for supplying a washing solution having a pH that is higher than a pH of the acidic solution;

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~~wherein the controller controls the pipette washing unit and the washing solution supplier such that the pipette is washed with the washing solution when the analysis result is less than a predetermined value, and the pipette is washed with the acidic solution~~ compares the analysis result to a predetermined value;
and

wherein the sample preparation unit washes the pipette by supplying the washing solution into the pipette from the washing solution supplier regardless of a result of the comparison of the analysis result and the predetermined value, and washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container when the analysis result is equal to or greater than the predetermined value.

28. (currently amended) The sample analyzer of claim 27, wherein the ~~controller controls the pipette washing unit and the washing solution supplier such that the pipette is washed with the acidic solution after having been washed with the washing solution~~ sample preparation unit washes the pipette by supplying the washing solution into the pipette from the washing solution supplier and then, when the analysis result is equal to or greater than the predetermined value, further washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container.

29. (withdrawn – currently amended) The sample analyzer of claim 26, wherein the ~~controller controls the pipette washing unit such that the pipette washing unit~~ sample preparation unit washes the pipette by suctioning and discharging the acidic solution into and from the pipette from the solution container and discharging the suctioned acidic solution from the pipette.

30. (withdrawn – currently amended) The sample analyzer of claim 26, wherein the ~~controller controls the pipette washing unit such that the pipette washing unit~~ sample preparation unit washes the pipette by holding the suctioned acidic solution within the pipette for a predetermined time.

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31. (withdrawn – currently amended) The sample analyzer of claim 26, further comprising a washing solution supplier for supplying a washing solution having a pH that is higher than a pH of the acidic solution;

~~wherein the controller controls the pipette washing unit and sample preparation unit washes the pipette by supplying the washing solution supplier such that an inside of the pipette is washed using the acidic solution, and to an outside of the pipette is washed using the washing solution.~~

32. (withdrawn – previously presented) The sample analyzer of claim 26, wherein the controller calculates number of bacteria contained in the sample.

33. (previously presented) The sample analyzer of claim 26, wherein the acidic solution has a pH of less than 5.0.

34. (previously presented) The sample analyzer of claim 26, wherein the acidic solution has a pH of between 2 and 3.

35. (currently amended) A bacteria analyzer for analyzing a bacterium in a sample, comprising:

~~a pipette for suctioning the sample;~~

a sample preparation unit comprising a pipette and configured for preparing a measured assay sample for measurement from the sample supplied by the pipette;

~~a pipette washing unit for washing the pipette;~~

a solution container holder for holding a solution container comprising an acidic solution used for the washing of the pipette ~~by the pipette washing unit;~~

a detection unit for obtaining a detection signal relating to a bacterium from the ~~measured assay~~ sample prepared by the sample preparation unit; and

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a controller in communication with the detection unit and configured for calculating obtaining an analysis result relating to a bacterium in the sample from the detection signal obtained by the detection unit;

wherein the sample preparation unit washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container.

36. (withdrawn – currently amended) The bacteria analyzer of claim 35, wherein ~~the controller controls the sample preparation unit such that the sample preparation unit~~ prepares the ~~measured~~ assay sample by diluting the sample with a dilution fluid to form a diluted sample, and staining the diluted sample with a stain.

37. (withdrawn – previously presented) The bacteria analyzer of claim 36, wherein the acidic solution is used as the dilution fluid.

38. (withdrawn – previously presented) The bacteria analyzer of claim 36, wherein the dilution fluid is used for destroying a membrane of the bacterium for effective staining of the bacterium.

39. (previously presented) The bacteria analyzer of claim 35, wherein the sample comprises urine.

40. (currently amended) A urine analyzer for analyzing a urine sample, comprising:
~~a pipette for suctioning the urine sample;~~

a sample preparation unit comprising a pipette and configured for preparing a measured diluted urine sample for measurement by diluting the urine sample supplied by the pipette;

~~a pipette washing unit for washing the pipette;~~

a solution container holder for holding a solution container comprising an acidic solution used for the diluting of the urine sample by the sample preparation unit and for the washing ~~of the pipette by the pipette washing unit;~~

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a detection unit for obtaining a detection signal from the ~~measured~~ diluted urine sample prepared by the sample preparation unit; and

a controller in communication with the detection unit and configured for calculating obtaining an analysis result from the detection signal obtained by the detection unit;

wherein the sample preparation unit prepares the diluted urine sample by diluting the urine sample supplied by the pipette with the acidic solution suctioned from the solution container, and washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container.

41. (currently amended) The bacteria analyzer of claim 35, further comprising a washing solution supplier for supplying a washing solution having a pH that is higher than a pH of the acidic solution;

~~wherein the controller controls the pipette washing unit and the washing solution supplier such that the pipette is washed with the washing solution when the analysis result is less than a predetermined number of bacteria, and the pipette is washed with the acidic solution~~ compares the analysis result to a predetermined value; and

wherein the sample preparation unit washes the pipette by supplying the washing solution into the pipette from the washing solution supplier regardless of a result of the comparison of the analysis result and the predetermined value, and washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container when the analysis result is equal to or greater than the predetermined number of bacteria.

42. (canceled)

43. (previously presented) The sample analyzer of claim 26, further comprising a sheath fluid supplier for supplying a sheath fluid to the detection unit to form a sheath flow.

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44-45. (canceled)

46. (currently amended) A sample analyzer for analyzing a sample, comprising:
- ~~a pipette for suctioning the sample;~~
 - a sample preparation unit comprising a pipette and configured for preparing a measured diluted sample for measurement by diluting the sample supplied by the pipette;
 - ~~a pipette washing unit for washing the pipette;~~
 - a solution container holder;
 - a solution container comprising an acidic solution used for the diluting of the sample by the sample preparation unit and ~~for the washing of the pipette by the pipette washing unit;~~
 - a detection unit for obtaining a detection signal from the ~~measured diluted~~ sample prepared by the sample preparation unit; and
 - a controller in communication with the detection unit and configured for ~~calculating obtaining~~ an analysis result from the detection signal obtained by the detection unit;
- wherein the sample preparation unit prepares the diluted sample by diluting the sample supplied by the pipette with the acidic solution suctioned from the solution container, and washes the pipette by suctioning the acidic solution into the pipette from the solution container.